

SHARP'S HILL FARM
BICESTER ROAD
KINGSWOOD
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
HP18 0RA
NGR SP 6845 1935

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING



By
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On behalf of
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SHARP'S HILL FARMHOUSE, BICESTER ROAD, KINGSWOOD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Introduction

Sharp's Hill Farmhouse has a medieval core enclosed within an early 19th-century brick facing. It lies directly on the north edge of the A41 just to the west of the village of Kingswood, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 6845 1935). Aylesbury Vale District Council granted permission for the the demolition of the extensions at the north end of the house. This report is written in response to the condition placed on this permission (11/01569/ALB).



Fig 1. View of Sharp's Hil Farm from the north-west, showing the three phases in the two extensions in question in the foreground.



Fig 2. The east elevation of the two extensions, showing the block bonding of the two.

Description

Although there are two extensions under investigation here, there are three phases of construction to the section to be demolished (Figs 1, 2, 3 & 9). The first phase is a two-storey pitch-roofed extension leading from the present farmhouse kitchen. This was then extended into a cat-slide lean-to on the west side in the second phase. The pitch of the roof was made shallower on this west side to accommodate the small additional room, but the west wall supporting the extended roof then needed an additional buttress to carry the load of the roof bearing down on it. This has been done with quite sophisticated tumbling of the brickwork, but nonetheless the buttress has begun to separate from the lean-to it was built to support (Fig 3).



Fig 3. View from the north-west, showing the split-leaf door to the stable (left) and inserted hayloft and the door to the larder (centre) leading on through to the 'Cold Store'.

The first phase is now divided into two storeys, though probably it would originally have been a single room open to the rafters. It leads directly off the present kitchen to the south, reached through what would once have been an external doorway prior to the construction of the extension. The door leaf is of vertical tongue-and-groove panels opening into the kitchen. The floor is paved with large (York?) flagstones and, on two sides (north and east) the room has low wooden benches raised on three brick piers (Fig 4). The flooring suggests that it was used as a cold and a wet

room. It is lit by a double sash window on the east side – that on the left side having only two panes and the right four panes. The exterior brickwork shows however that this window has replaced an earlier one, the closers of which survive on the south side. It seems to have been a long, thin window higher up in the wall than the present one.



Fig 4. The 'Cold Store' flagstone floor and wooden benches on brick piers. Also showing is the door on the left hand side, repaired at its foot.

The plain ceiling has a single chamfered beam running north-south. The ceiling itself is ceiled with plasterboard. Hooks on this ceiling could suggest that this was an area for butchering and hanging carcasses and preparation of the meat (Fig 5).



Fig 5. The 'Cold Store' plasterboard ceiling, beam and hooks.

A door in the west wall leads into the second phase. The door leaf is panelled with three broad panels with horizontal battens on the rear and a small window opening (now boarded over Fig 6). The base of this door shows signs of repair which is another indication that the room was a wet room that needed frequent washing out, leading to the rotting of the door foot (Fig 4).

The small lean-to addition has a tongue-and-groove ceiling (Fig 6). This would appear to be a larder as the window is meshed over to exclude flies.



Fig 6. The lean-to representing the second phase of construction.

A panelled and battened door at the north end of this small room leads out onto a small brick-paved area, partially covered later in concrete (Fig 3). Also leading off this paved area, on the east side, is a split-leaf stable door. This gives the only access to the third phase of construction, the single stall stable.



Figs 7 & 8. The single store stable with loft over the 'Cold Store'

This last extension, built of fletton brick in Flemish bond (the same bond as the first extension), has a pitched roof following the line of the original pitch of the first extension before the addition of the lean-to and the cat-slide roof. The stable part is open to the rafters, but the hayloft has been inserted above the cold store in the earlier phase of the building (Fig 7). Judging from the interior, the roof covering both extensions has been replaced recently though re-using old tiles externally.

The stable floor is paved in brick and while there is no sign of a drainage pattern in the brickwork there is a drain pipe at ground floor level beneath the north wall, but this has been inserted (Fig 8). Hearsay has it that this stable was last used for slaughtering animals, but there is no physical evidence to back this up. There is a window high up on the northern wall with an internally-opening wooden shutter. A hole has been cut out of the base of this shutter, presumably to allow access for barn owls.

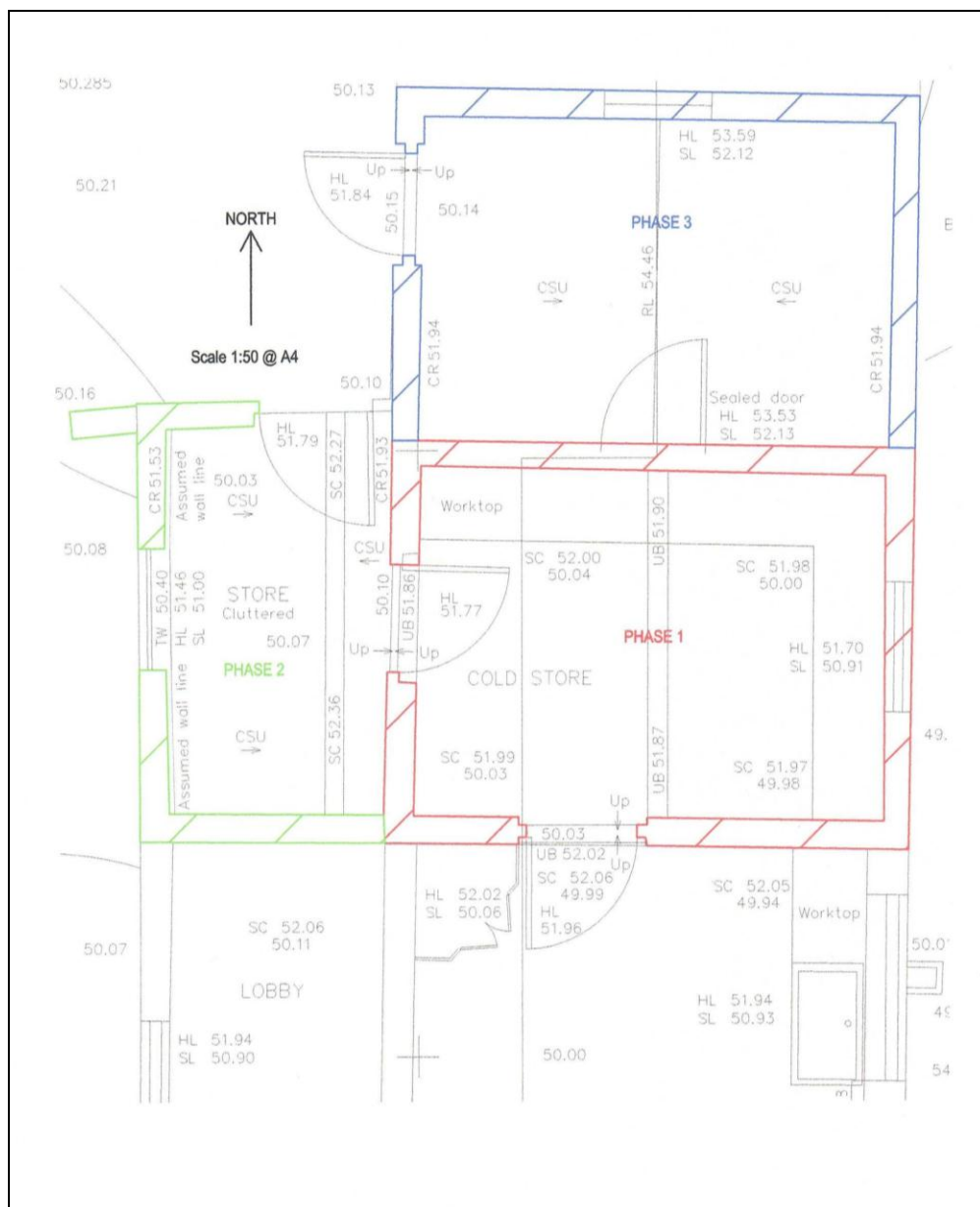


Fig 9. Plan showing the three phases of the two north extensions